

RESPONSE

In accordance with the current Office Action, claims 1-2, 13-15, and 21-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. 6,369,343 to Krenz et al. in view of Japanese patent No. 60-259,319 to Inoue. Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Krenz et al. in view of Inoue, and further in view of U.S. 6,844,515 to Byrnes et al. Claims 3-12 and 17-20 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The disclosure is also objected to since it is believed by the Examiner that page 7, lines 25-26 of the specification identifies a workpiece 28 as being shown in Fig. 4. This objection stems from the lack of such workpiece being shown in the figure. It will be appreciated, however, that the reference to Fig. 4 in the identified lines was with respect to the electrode 30 since it could better be seen therein with workpiece 28 removed. Workpiece 28 is instead shown in Fig. 2 as being retained in a predetermined position in work station 12.

With respect to the Krenz et al. patent, it is clear that the work station 12 includes a base 18 supported on the bottom of the tank 14, where a workpiece fixture 20 for holding a workpiece 22 is attached to the upper surface of the base 18 (col. 2, lines 48-50). In addition, first and second electrodes 48 and 50 are provided so that clean edges may be defined on the workpiece 22 (col. 3, lines 36-45). As the Examiner clearly recognizes, however, the '343 patent does not disclose, teach or suggest the use of a second mechanism for positioning the electrode which also is connected to the workpiece fixture 20 so that the electrode is automatically aligned with a designated portion of the workpiece.

Accordingly, the Examiner relies upon Japanese patent 60-259,319 to Inoue for teaching the use of a second mechanism to automatically align the electrode with the workpiece. The Examiner takes the position that elements identified by reference numerals 35, 36, 34 and shown in Fig. 3 constitute a mechanism to automatically align the

electrode with the workpiece. Given the fact that nothing is mentioned in the English abstract regarding these elements, and that the figures in the Inoue reference are anything but clear, it is not seen, without further explanation, where such elements perform the function asserted by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants have commissioned an English translation of the entire reference, a copy of which is attached hereto, so as to confirm the Examiner's interpretation of the Inoue reference.

It is seen in the translation of the Inoue reference that an object to be machined 7 is placed on a bottom plate 20 of working unit 5 and an electrode 6 is attached to a movable plate 22. Further, the movable plate 34 is raised and lowered so that the forming electrode 6 is maintained opposite object 7 at a constant gap. The movable plate 34 is guided to the support guide shafts 35 via bushings 36. There is nothing to indicate that the object 7 is retained in position on the bottom plate 20. Therefore, while Inoue does disclose a mechanism for positioning an electrode in a manner that is movable into and out of engagement with a designated portion of the workpiece, it is not seen where automatic alignment of such electrode is present without.

Even if elements 35, 34 and 36 of the Inoue reference could be fairly interpreted to automatically align the electrode as the Examiner asserts, it is not understood how or why the workpiece fixture 20 in the Krenz et al. patent could be modified by one of ordinary skill in the art to include such elements. Nor does the Examiner explain how elements 35, 34 and 36 of Inoue (i.e., the "second mechanism") could be connected to the workpiece fixture (i.e., the "first mechanism") in Krenz et al. as claimed.

Regarding claim 2 where the electrode is electrically insulated, the Examiner refers to Figures 2 and 3 of the Inoue reference. Once again, it is not seen where mention of such electrical insulation for the electrode is made within the specification. Thus, it is requested that the Examiner set forth exactly how elements 35, 34, and 36 would be connected to the workpiece fixture in Krenz et al. and still maintain electrical insulation of the electrode from the workpiece. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of such claim.

Claims 14 and 15 relate to a third mechanism which is also connected to the first mechanism and automatically aligns a second electrode with the workpiece. While Krenz et al. discloses a second electrode for machining on the opposite side of the workpiece from the first electrode, there is nothing to suggest that the teachings of the Inoue reference would be compatible with the workpiece fixture therefor.

Accordingly, Applicants hereby respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1-2, 13-15, and 21-22 and request that such rejections be withdrawn.

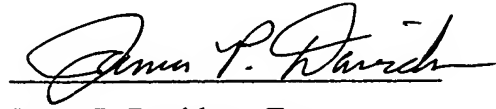
Regarding claim 16, it is not seen how the items in the Byrnes et al. reference identified by the Examiner are equivalent to the housing and locator member in the subject claim. More specifically, column 3, lines 15-29 of Byrne et al. describe the clamping device 54 in more detail. It will be appreciated therein that operating member 100 moves to rotate clamping device 54 between an open position and a clamping position. In other words, it operates as a lever, not a housing as claimed. Further, item 104 in the '515 patent is a locking groove which engages a locking tab 106 to establish a predetermined locking position. Accordingly, it is not seen where locking groove 104 nor operating member 100 is used to align a workpiece. For such reasons, as well as the aforementioned arguments relating to the Krenz et al./Inoue combination, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 16.

It is appreciated that claims 3-12 and 17-20 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Since Applicants believe that all the claims as originally presented are allowable, however, they have not amended claims 3 or 17.

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants request that the examiner withdraw the rejection of all pending claims (claims 1-22) and place the application in condition for allowance. Should the examiner have any questions or desire

to discuss this case in more detail, he is encouraged to contact James P. Davidson, Esq. At
(513) 505-0992.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James P. Davidson", written over a horizontal line.

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